

## CHAPTER VII

*How the Most High gave a Beginning to His Works and Created All Material Things for Man, while Angels and Men were Created in order to be the People of Whom the Incarnate Word was to be the Head.*

80. The Cause of all causes is God, who created all things that have being. His powerful arm gave existence to all his wonderful works *ad extra* when and how He chose. The beginning and succession of the work of creation is described by Moses in the opening chapter of Genesis. Since the Lord has given me an understanding thereof, I will mention what I think useful for elucidating the mysterious origin of the Incarnation of the Word and our Redemption.

81. The words of the first chapter of Genesis are as follows (Gen. 1:1-5):

1. *In the beginning God created heaven and earth.*
2. *And the earth was void and empty, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit of God moved over the waters.*
3. *And God said: Be light made. And light was made.*
4. *And God saw the light that it was good; and He divided the light from the darkness.*
5. *And he called the light day, and the darkness night; and there was evening and morning one day, etc.*

On this first day Moses says *in the beginning God created heaven and earth*, because this beginning was that given by the powerful God, existing in his immutable Being, as it were issuing from Himself to create from Himself the creatures, which then began to have existence in themselves, and God as it were recreating Himself in his handiwork as works properly perfected. And before creating intellectual and rational creatures, desiring also the order of executing these works to be most perfect, He created heaven for angels and men, and the earth as a place of pilgrimage for mortals. These places are so adapted to their end and so perfect that, as David says of them, *the heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament and the earth declareth the glory of the work of his hands* (Ps. 18:2). The heavens in their beauty manifest his magnificence and glory, because in them is deposited the predestined reward of the just. And the earthly firmament announced there would be creatures and men to inhabit the earth, and men would journey upon it to their Creator. Before He created them the Most High desired to provide for them and create that which was necessary for the attainment of their end and for living in the manner ordained for them. Thus everywhere would be found creatures compelled as it were to obey and love their Maker and Benefactor,\* and by his works to learn of his admirable Name and infinite perfections (Rom. 1:20).

82. Of the earth Moses says it was void, which he does not say of the heavens, for God had created the angels at the instant indicated by the words of Moses, *God said: Be light made, and light was made*. He speaks here not only of material light, but also of the intellectual or angelic lights. He does not make express mention of them but merely includes them in this word *light* due to the proclivity of the Hebrews to attribute divinity to new things, even of much greater inferiority than the angels. But the metaphor of light was very appropriate to signify the angelic nature, and mystically the light of their science and grace with which they were endowed at their creation. God created the earth conjointly with the heavens in order to call into existence hell in

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\* cf. Is. 45:24; Rom. 14:11; Philip. 2:10 [Ed.]

its center, for at the instant of its creation there were left in the interior of that globe spacious and wide caverns suitable for hell, purgatory and limbo; and in hell was created at the same time material fire and other requisites which now serve for the punishment of the damned. The Lord presently divided the light from the darkness, and called the light day and the darkness night; and this happened not only in regard to the natural day and night, but also in regard to the good and bad angels, for to the good He gave the eternal light of his vision and called it day, the eternal day, and to the bad the night of sin, casting them into the eternal darkness of hell. Thus we were to be taught the intimate relation between the merciful liberality of the Creator and Vivifier and the justice of the most just Judge in punishment.

83. The angels were created in the empyrean heaven and in the state of grace by which they could be first to merit the reward of glory; for though they were in the midst of glory, the Divinity himself was not to be made manifest to them face to face, and in clear light, until by grace they had merited this reward by obeying the divine will. The holy angels, as well as the bad ones, remained only a very short time in the state of probation, for their creation and probation with its result were three distinct instants or moments, separated by short intermissions. In the first instant they were all created and endowed with graces and gifts, coming into existence as most beautiful and perfect creatures. Then followed a short pause, during which the will of the Creator was propounded and intimated, and the law and command was given them to acknowledge Him as their Maker and supreme Lord and to fulfill the end for which they had been created. During this pause, instant or interval, St. Michael and his angels fought that great battle with the dragon and his followers which is described by the Apostle St. John in chapter XII of the Apocalypse (v. 7). The good angels, persevering in grace, merited eternal happiness, and the disobedient ones, rebelling against God, merited the punishment which they now suffer.

84. Though all this of the second instant could have happened in a very brief time because of the subtle nature of the angels and the power of God, nevertheless I understood that the kind consideration of the Most High permitted a certain delay; with the interposition of some intervals of time He proposed to them the good and the bad, truth and falsehood, justice and injustice, his grace and friendship versus sin and enmity with God. They were enabled to see eternal reward and eternal punishment, the perdition of Lucifer and of those who would follow him. His Majesty showed them hell and its pains. They saw it all, for by virtue of their superior and excellent nature they understood the essence of other more qualified and limited creatures, so before falling from grace they were clearly aware of the place of their chastisement. Although they did not know in the same manner the reward of glory, they had of it other knowledge, and besides they had the manifest and express promise of the Lord. The Most High had therefore justified his cause and proceeded with the greatest equity and justice. Yet since all this goodness and equity did not suffice to restrain Lucifer and his followers, they were chastised in their stubbornness and hurled into the depths of the hellish caverns, while the good angels were confirmed in eternal grace and glory. All this was consummated in the third instant, and thus it became truly manifest that no being outside of God himself is impeccable by nature, since the angel who possessed such excellence, and who was adorned with so many great gifts of knowledge and grace, nevertheless sinned and was lost. What will become of human frailty if the divine power does not defend it, and if it forces God to forsake it?

85. It remains to investigate the motive Lucifer and his confederates had in their sin (which is what I am searching for here), and what was the occasion of their disobedience and fall. In regard to this it was made known to me that they could commit many sins as far as the guilt of

sin (*secundum reatum*) is concerned, although they did not consummate them in acts; however, because of those which they did actually commit freely and of their own depraved will they acquired the disposition to all bad acts, inducing others to commit them and approving in others those sins which they could not commit themselves. Following the bad inclinations which from that time on filled Lucifer, he fell into a most disorderly self-love, which arose from the consciousness of being endowed with greater gifts and greater beauty of nature and grace than the other inferior angels. He tarried with inordinate pleasure in this consciousness, and thus self-satisfied he became lax and remiss in the gratitude which was due to God as the sole cause of all he had received. Turning again and again in admiration toward himself, he took pleasure in his own beauty and grace, attributing them to himself and loving them as his own. This disorderly self-love not only caused him to exalt himself because of the superior virtues which he had received, but also induced him to harbor envy and covetousness for other gifts and excellences not his own; and because it was not possible to obtain them, he conceived a mortal hatred and indignation against God, who created him out of nothing, and against all his creatures.

86. Hence arose his disobedience, presumption, injustice, infidelity, blasphemy, and perhaps also a certain kind of idolatry, for he coveted for himself the adoration and reverence due to God. He blasphemed the divine magnificence and sanctity, and failed in the trust and loyalty due to Him; he plotted to destroy all the creatures, and presumed to be able to do all this and much more by his own power. Thus his pride ascends continually (Ps. 73:23) and perseveres, although his arrogance is greater than his strength (Is. 16:6), for in this he cannot increase, and in sin one abyss calls the other (Ps. 41:8). The first angel who sinned was Lucifer, as evidenced in chapter XIV of Isaias (v. 12), and this induced the others to follow him; hence he is called the prince of demons, not because of his nature, for this would not secure to him that title, but because of his guilt. Those who sinned were not all of one order or hierarchy, but among all hierarchies there were many who sinned.

87. It is proper that I also explain what was made known to me concerning the kind of honor and excellence to which Lucifer aspired and which he envied. Since in the works of God there is measure, number and weight (Wis. 11:21), his providence decided to show to the angels, immediately after their creation and before they could incline to diverse ends, the purpose for which He had created them with such an exalted and perfect nature. Of all this I obtained the following information: At first they received a more explicit intelligence of the being of God, one in substance, triune in Persons, and that they were commanded to adore and reverence Him as their Creator and highest Lord, infinite in his essence and attributes. All subjected themselves to this command and obeyed it, but with a certain difference: The good angels obeyed through love and because of the justice of it,\* offering their love and good will, freely admitting and believing what was above their intelligence, and obeying with joy; Lucifer, on the other hand, submitted himself because the opposite seemed to him impossible. He did not submit with perfect charity, for he was as it were divided in his will between himself and the infallible truth of the Lord. In consequence it happened that the precept appeared to him in a measure difficult and violent, and his fulfillment of it was lacking in love and in the desire to do justice; thus he exposed himself beforehand to the danger of not persevering. Although grace did not leave him because of this remissness and slowness in the accomplishment of these first acts, nevertheless his bad disposition began with them, for there remained with him a certain weakness and laxity of virtue and spirit, and the perfection of his nature did not shine forth as it should have. It

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\* *Dignum et justum est*, as it says in one of the responses at the Preface of the Mass. [Ed.]

appears to me the effect of this remissness in Lucifer is similar to that which is caused in the soul by a deliberate venial sin. I do not say that he sinned mortally, nor even venially at that time, since he fulfilled the precept of God; but this fulfillment was remiss and imperfect, springing more from a sense of overwhelming compulsion than from a loving willingness to obey, and hence he put himself in danger of falling.

88. In the second place the angels were informed God was to create a human nature and reasoning creatures lower than themselves so they too could love, fear and reverence Him as their Author and eternal Good. They were informed these were to stand in high favor, and that the second Person of the blessed Trinity was to become incarnate and assume their human nature, raising his human nature to the hypostatic union and to divine Personality, and hence they were to acknowledge Him as their Head, not only as God, but as God and man, adoring Him and reverencing Him as the Godman. Moreover, these same angels were to be his inferiors in dignity and grace and were to be his servants. God gave them an intelligence of the propriety and equity, the justice and reasonableness of such a position, for the acceptation of the foreseen merits of this Man-God was exhibited to them as the source of the grace which they now possessed and of the glory which they were to obtain. They understood also that they themselves had been, and all the rest of the creatures would be, created for his glory, because He was to be superior to all. All those who were capable of knowing and enjoying God were to be his people and members of that Head in order to recognize and reverence Him. All of these commands were presently given to the angels.

89. To this command all the obedient and holy angels submitted themselves, and they gave their full assent and acknowledgment with a humble and loving subjection of the will. But Lucifer resisted, full of envy and pride, and induced his followers to likewise resist, as they in reality did, preferring to follow him and disobey the divine command. This wicked prince persuaded them that he would be their head, and that he would set up a government independent and separate from Christ. Such blindness could envy and pride cause in an angel, and such a disordered affection, that it caused the contagion of sin to spread among so many other angels.

90. Then happened that great battle in heaven which St. John describes (Apoc. 12:7), for the obedient and holy angels, filled with an ardent desire of hastening the glory of the Most High and the honor of the incarnate Word, asked permission and as it were the consent of God to resist and contradict the dragon, and the permission was granted. But also another mystery was concealed in all this: When it was revealed to the angels that they would have to obey the incarnate Word another, a third precept, was given them, namely that they were to admit as a superior conjointly with Him a Woman in whose womb the Onlybegotten of the Father was to assume flesh, and that this Woman was to be the Queen and Mistress of all the creatures. The good angels in obeying this command of the Lord advanced and augmented their humility, and by it subjected themselves, praising the power and sacraments of the Most High. But Lucifer and his confederates, by this precept and mystery, raised themselves to greater pride and haughtiness. In disorderly fury he aspired to be himself the head of the entire human race and of the angelic orders, and if there was to be a hypostatic union he demanded that it be consummated in him.

91. The decree constituting him inferior to the Mother of the incarnate Word and our Mistress he opposed with horrible blasphemies. Turning against the Author of these great wonders in unbridled indignation, and calling upon the other angels, he exhorted them saying: "Unjust are these commands, and injury is done to my greatness; this human nature which Thou, Lord, lookest upon with so much love, and which Thou dost favor so highly, I will persecute and destroy. To this end I will direct all my power and all my aspirations. And this Woman, Mother

of the incarnate Word, I will hurl from the position in which Thou hast proposed to place Her, and at my hands the plan which Thou settest up shall come to naught.”

92. This proud boast so aroused the indignation of the Lord that in order to humble it He spoke to Lucifer: “This Woman, whom thou dost refuse to honor, shall crush thy head (Gen. 3:15), and by Her shalt thou be vanquished and annihilated. And if through thy pride death enters into the world (Wis. 2:24), life and salvation of mortals shall enter through the humility of this Woman. Those who are of the nature and likeness of that Man and Woman shall enjoy the gifts and the crowns which thou and thy followers have lost.” To all this the dragon, filled with indignation against whatever he understood of the divine will and decrees, answered only with pride and by threatening destruction to the whole human race. The good angels saw the just indignation of the Most High against Lucifer and his apostates, and they combated them with the arms of the understanding, reason and truth.

93. The Almighty here worked another wonderful mystery. Having given to all the angels a sufficiently clear intelligence of the great mystery of the hypostatic union, He showed them the image of the most holy Virgin in the mode of our imaginary visions (according to our way of understanding such things). They were shown the perfection of the human nature in the revelation of an image representing a most perfect Woman, in whom the almighty arm of the Most High would work more wonderfully than in all the rest of creatures, for in Her He would deposit the graces and gifts of his right hand in a higher and more eminent manner. This sign or vision of the Queen of heaven and Mother of the incarnate Word was made known and manifest to all the angels, good and bad. The good ones at the sign of it broke forth in admiration and in canticles of praise, and from that time on they began to defend the honor of the incarnate God and of his holy Mother, being armed with ardent zeal and with the invincible shield of that vision; on the contrary, the dragon and his allies conceived implacable hatred and fury against Christ and his most holy Mother. Then happened all that which is described in chapter XII of the Apocalypse, which I will explain, as far as it has been given me, in the following chapter.